

15.3 Greek present participle, active and middle-passive

The Greek present participles are based, obviously, upon the present stem of the verb. Here we will "construct" the active and the middle-passive present participles. This will help you recognize them readily when you find them in your readings.

We start with the **ACTIVE PRESENT PARTICIPLE**, which has three endings, masculine, feminine, and neuter. The masculine and neuter belong to the third declension, and the masculine is similar to the noun γέγων, γέγοντος. In contrast to the noun γέγων, however, the participle will need also forms for feminine and neuter genders. Starting, as already stated, with the masculine, we create first the form of the genitive. The formula is

present verbal stem + ο + mark of the present pple: **ντ** + genitive ending **ος** = **ἄρχ-ο-ντ-ος**

Now the nominative. Consonantal stems of the 3rd declension tend to mark their nominative, either with σ or by lengthening the stem vowel. The present active participle does not take σ but rather it lengthens the vowel ο : *ἄρχωντ- We know that the dental τ is dropped at the end of a word: this will occur both in the masculine and in the neuter (which has no lengthening, precisely in contrast to the masculine).

Being an adjective of more than one gender, the participle is cited in the nominative. I add at this point the ready-made feminine, because the process that leads to its form is slightly more complicated¹ :

ἄρχων ἄρχουσα ἄρχον = ruling

The masculine and the neuter belong to the third declension; the feminine belongs to the first. Here is the complete declension of this participle:

<i>singular</i>			
	<i>masculine</i>	<i>feminine</i>	<i>neuter</i>
<i>nom</i>	ἄρχων	ἄρχουσα	ἄρχον
<i>gen</i>	ἄρχοντ-ος	ἀρχούσ-ης	ἄρχοντ-ος
<i>dat</i>	ἄρχοντ -ι	ἀρχούσ-η	ἄρχοντ -ι
<i>acc</i>	ἄρχοντ -α	ἄρχουσ-αν	ἄρχον
<i>voc</i>	= nom	= nom	= nom

<i>plural</i>			
	<i>masculine</i>	<i>feminine</i>	<i>neuter</i>
<i>nom</i>	ἄρχοντ-ες	ἄρχουσαι	ἄρχοντ -α
<i>gen</i>	ἀρχόντ-ων	ἀρχουσ-ῶν	ἀρχόντ-ων
<i>dat</i>	ἄρχουσι(ν)	ἀρχούσ-αις	ἄρχουσι(ν)
<i>acc</i>	ἄρχοντ-ας	ἀρχούσ-ας	ἄρχοντ -α
<i>voc</i>	= nom	= nom	= nom

THERE IS A SHORTCUT FOR THE FORMATION OF THE **PRESENT ACTIVE PARTICIPLE**:

Learn the present participle of the verb *to be*: ὢν οὔσα ὄν. Click [here](#) for its declension and apply it to the present stem of an active verb: ἄρχ-ων ἄρχ-ουσα ἄρχ-ον

The **MIDDLE-PASSIVE PRESENT PARTICIPLE** is a Type I adjective similar to ἀγαθός, ἀγαθή, ἀγαθόν : ἀρχόμενος, ἀρχομένη, ἀρχόμενον = being ruled or, simply "ruled." You will find examples of some uses of the Greek participle in [15.5](#).

Notes: 1) For those who are curious: the feminine started with a consonant that later disappeared from the language, known as "yod," represented by "j" which I will italicize for clarity. ντ was dropped before this consonant and the compensatory lengthening you have seen in the "rogue" stems of the 3rd declension ([12.1](#)) occurred: ἄρχοντ-*j*-α

2) In the dative plural masculine and neuter, ντ was dropped before the σ of the ending and then the compensatory lengthening alluded to in Note 1 took place: ἄρχοντ-σι(ν) > ἀρχουσι(ν)